EXHIBIT A

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS MCALLEN DIVISION

ERNESTO GRACIA CANTU,	§
Plaintiff,	§
	§
v.	§ CIVIL ACTION NO. 7:21-cv-00136
BIG LOTS STORES, INC.,	§ JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
Defendant.	Š
•	§

DEFENDANT'S INDEX OF MATTERS BEING FILED

Defendant Big Lots, Inc. files this Index of Matters Being Filed pursuant to Local Rule 81 of the Southern District of Texas, as follows:

- (1) All Executed Process:
 - Civil Process Request Form for Big Lots, Inc.
 - Citation and Affidavit of Service
- (2) All State Court Pleadings:
 - Plaintiff's Original Petition filed March 1, 2021
 - Defendant's Original Answer filed March 30, 2021
- (3) State Court Case Summary
- (4) Letter from court notifying of signed order filed April 1, 2021
- (5) List of all Counsel of Record

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that on the 8th day of April 2021, a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been forwarded to all counsel of record, as follows:

Michael J. Cisneros State Bar No. 00793509 312 Lindberg McAllen, Texas 78501

 $\frac{email@cisneroslawfirm.com}{Counsel\ for\ Plaintiff}$

	E-MAIL
	HAND DELIVERY
	FACSIMILE
	OVERNIGHT MAIL
	REGULAR, FIRST CLASS MAIL
	E-SERVICE (E-SERVICE ONLY)
\boxtimes	E-FILE (E-FILE AND SERVICE)
	CERTIFIED MAIL/RETURN RECEIPT

REQUESTED

NOTICE: Pursuant to TRCP 126: Statement of Inability to Afford Payment of Court Costs or an Appeal Bond filed = NO

C-0783-21-I 398TH DISTRICT COURT, HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

CITATION THE STATE OF TEXAS

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of twenty (20) days after you were served with this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org.

BIG LOTS STORES INC.
REGISTERED AGENT: CORPORATION SERVICE COMPANY D/B/ A
CSC-LAWYERS INCORPORATING SERVICE COMPANY,
211 EAST 7TH STREET SUITE 620
AUSTIN TX 78701-3218

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the **PLAINTIFFS ORIGINAL PETITION** on or before 10:00 o'clock a.m. on the Monday next after the expiration of twenty (20) days after the date of service hereof, before the **Honorable L. "Keno" Vasquez, 398th District Court** of Hidalgo County, Texas at the Courthouse at 100 North Closner, Edinburg, Texas 78539.

Said petition was filed on this the 1st day of March, 2021 and a copy of same accompanies this citation. The file number and style of said suit being C-0783-21-I, ERNESTO GRACIA CANTU VS. BIG LOTS STORES INC.

Said Petition was filed in said court by Attorney MICHAEL J. CISNEROS, 312 LINBERG MCALLEN TX 78501.

The nature of the demand is fully shown by a true and correct copy of the petition accompanying this citation and made a part hereof.

The officer executing this writ shall promptly serve the same according to requirements of law, and the mandates thereof, and make due return as the law directs.

ISSUED AND GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL of said Court at Edinburg, Texas on this the 3rd day of March, 2021.

LAURA HINOJOSA, DISTRICT CLERK 100 N. CLOSNER, EDINBURG, TEXAS HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

JASSIA DE LA PAZ, DEPUTY CLERK

4/1/2021

A true copy I certify
LAURA HINOUSA
District Clerk, Hidalgo County To

C-0783-21-I OFFICER'S RETURN

Came to hand	on	ofexas by deliv	ering to ea	_, 202a	at o	'clock Defendant i	m. and	l executed in
this citation, upon of the	on which I e	ndorsed the d	late of deli	ivery to said I	Defendant tog	gether with	the accon	
NAME		DATE	TIME	PLACE				
And not execution finding said determined addition to any same trip.		_ and the in I actually a	tormation and necess	received as sarily traveled	to the wher mi	eabouts of les in the s	said dete ervice of t	endant, being his citation, ir
Fees: serving miles	copy(s) \$_ \$_							
DEPUTY In accordance to the return. If the must either be vecontain the state.	o Rule 107, no Rule return is so	CONSTA the officer or igned by a po e signed under	ABLE OR authorized erson other the pena	r than a sherif lty of perjury.	FTHE COU serves or att ff, constable	RT empts to s or the cler	erve a cita k of the co	ourt, the return
"My name is is and correct.			,and	, my dat I declare und	e of birth is er penalty o	f perjury th	a hat the for	nd the address regoing is true
EXECUTED in	C	ounty, State	of Texas, o	on the	day of	, 2	202	
Declarant"								
If Certified by Date of Expira			exas					

Hidalgo County District Clerks Reviewed By: Raul Hernandez

NOTICE: Pursuant to TRCP 126: Statement of Inability to Afford Payment of Court Costs or an Appeal Bond filed = NO

C-0783-21-I 398TH DISTRICT COURT, HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

CITATION THE STATE OF TEXAS

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of twenty (20) days after you were served with this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org.

BIG LOTS STORES INC. REGISTERED AGENT: CORPORATION SERVICE COMPANY D/B/A CSC-LAWYERS INCORPORATING SERVICE COMPANY, 211 EAST 7TH STREET SUITE 620 AUSTIN TX 78701-3218

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the PLAINTIFFS ORIGINAL PETITION on or before 10:00 o'clock a.m. on the Monday next after the expiration of twenty (20) days after the date of service hereof, before the Honorable L. "Keno" Vasquez, 398th District Court of Hidalgo County, Texas at the Courthouse at 100 North Closner, Edinburg, Texas 78539.

Said petition was filed on this the 1st day of March, 2021 and a copy of same accompanies this citation. The file number and style of said suit being C-0783-21-I, ERNESTO GRACIA CANTU VS. BIG LOTS STORES INC.

Said Petition was filed in said court by Attorney MICHAEL J. CISNEROS, 312 LINBERG MCALLEN TX 78501.

The nature of the demand is fully shown by a true and correct copy of the petition accompanying this citation and made a part hereof.

The officer executing this writ shall promptly serve the same according to requirements of law, and the mandates thereof, and make due return as the law directs.

ISSUED AND GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL of said Court at Edinburg, Texas on this the 3rd day of March, 2021.

LAURA HINOJOSA, DISTRICT CLERK 100 N. CLOSNER, EDINBURG, TEXAS HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

JASSIA DE LA PAZ, DEPUTY CLERK

4/1/2021

A true copy I certify LAURA HINOJOS

Clerk Hidango Co

3/24/2021 3:37 PM Hidalgo County District Clerks Reviewed By: Raul Hernandez

C-0783-21-I OFFICER'S RETURN

Came to hand on 3 of Max, 2021/ at 3.30 o'clock m. and executed in County, Texas by delivering to each of the within named Defendant in person, a true copy of
this citation, upon which I endorsed the date of delivery to said Defendant together with the accompanying copy
this citation, upon which I endorsed the date of delivery to said Defendant together with the accompanying copy of the (petition) at the following times and places, to-wit: Orthod Man
NAMEDY Joh Stry DATE TIME PLACE
OCry Svc. Co. 3-521 Cluster, 2x
And not executed as to the defendant, the diligence used in
finding said defendant, being: and the cause of failure to execute this process is:
and the information received as to the whereabouts of said defendant, being:
. I actually and necessarily traveled miles in the service of this citation, in addition to any other mileage I may have traveled in the service of other process in the same case during the
same trip.
Fees: serving copy(s) \$
miles\$
Sae Money
DEPUTY
COMPLETE IF YOU ARE PERSON OTHER THAN A SHERIFF,
CONSTABLE OR CLERK OF THE COURT
In accordance to Rule 107, the officer or authorized person who serves or attempts to serve a citation must sign the return. If the return is signed by a person other than a sheriff, constable or the clerk of the court, the return
must either be verified or be signed under the penalty of perjury. A return signed under penalty of perjury must
contain the statement below in substantially the following form:
"My name is \(\tau \in \mathread \tau \tau \alpha \alpha \tau \alpha \a
"My name is Joe Merew, my date of birth is and the address is 2/34 Von 2011 18559, and I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true
and correct.
EXECUTED in Movis County, State of Texas, on the 5 day of Man., 202 .
EXECUTED in //hvis County, State of Texas, on the day of _///kin, 2021
Chi Man
Declarant"
2249 8/31/22
If Certified by the Supreme Court of Texas
Date of Expiration / PSC Number

Collect on Delivery
Collect on Delivery Re

Restricted Delivery

PS Form 3811, July 2020 PSN 7530-02-000-9063

7020 0090.0002 1912 1448

2. Article Number (Threster from service label)

Domestic Return Receipt

D Signature Confirmation

37/20214:54 PM Hidalgo County District Clerks Reviewed By: Armando Cantu

	CAUSE NO.: _	C-0	783-21-I
ERNESTO GRACIA CANTU		\$	IN THE JUDICIAL DISTRICT
VS.		9	COURT OF
BIG LOTS STORES INC.		\$ \$	HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

PLAINTIFF'S ORIGINAL PETITION

TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF SAID COURT:

NOW COMES ERNESTO GRACIA CANTU, hereinafter referred to as Plaintiff, and files this, his Original Petition against BIG LOTS STORES INC., hereinafter referred to as Defendant, and for cause of action will show the Court the following:

DISCOVERY CONTROL PLAN - BY RULE (LEVEL 3)

1. Plaintiff intends to conduct discovery under Level 3 as provided by Rule 190 of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF

2. Plaintiff is seeking monetary relief from Defendant in an amount that is more than \$100,000.00, but less than \$250,000.00.

PARTIES

- 3. Plaintiff ERNESTO GRACIA CANTU resides in Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas.
- 4. Defendant BIG LOTS STORES INC. is a duly licensed corporation in Texas that may be served with process by serving its registered agent, Corporation Service Company d/b/a CSC-Lawyers Incorporating Service Company, at 211 E. 7th Street, Suite 620, Austin, Texas 78701-3218.

A true copy I certify
LAURA HINOIDSA
District Clark, Hidalgo County, Taxas

Page 17/2021 4:54 PM
Hidalgo County District Clerks
Reviewed By: Armando Cantu

C-0783-21-I

VENUE AND JURISDICTION

- 5. The incident described hereinbelow or events giving rise to Plaintiff's claim against Defendant arose in Edinburg, Hidalgo County, Texas. Venue for this cause of action therefore lies in Hidalgo County, Texas.
- 6. The damages that Plaintiff is seeking from Defendant are within the jurisdictional limits of the Court. This Court therefore has jurisdiction of this cause of action.

FACTS

7. On July 5, 2019, at approximately 11:00 a.m., Plaintiff was at Defendant's Big Lots store located in Edinburg, Hidalgo County, Texas for business purposes. Defendant had beach chairs stocked on shelves in an aisle. As Plaintiff was looking at the chairs, several chairs fell off of a shelf and hit Plaintiff, causing him to suffer injuries and damages. Defendant's employees stocked the chairs on the shelves in an unsecured and improper manner which caused them to fall off the shelf and hit Plaintiff. Defendant's employees therefore created the dangerous condition on the store premises that caused Plaintiff to suffer injuries and damages. Knowledge of the dangerous condition is therefore imputed on Defendant under Texas Premises Liability Law. After the incident occurred, the store manager arrived in the aisle to investigate the incident. The manager touched a chair that was stocked on a shelf, and several chairs fell off the shelf and hit the manager as well.

<u>CAUSE OF ACTION BASED ON</u> PREMISES LIABILITY LAW AND PROXIMATE CAUSE

8. At all time that is material to the incident described hereinabove and this case, Defendant was negligent under premises liability law in that: A. Plaintiff was a business invitee, B. Defendant owned, possessed, and/or controlled the premises where the incident described hereinabove occurred, C. A condition on the premises, that beach chairs that were stocked on shelves in an unsecured and improper manner, posed an

Hidalgo County District Clerks
Reviewed By: Armando Cantu

C-0783-21-I

unreasonable risk of harm, D. Defendant knew or reasonably should have known of the danger posed by the condition, and E. Defendant breached its duty of ordinary care by failing to adequately warn Plaintiff of the condition and failing to make the condition reasonably safe. This negligence by Defendant was the sole proximate cause or a proximate cause of the incident described hereinabove and of the injuries and damages suffered by Plaintiff, as set out hereinbelow.

DAMAGES

9. As a proximate cause of the negligence of Defendant in causing the incident described hereinabove, Plaintiff suffered injuries, suffered physical pain and mental anguish in the past, will suffer physical pain and mental anguish in the future, suffered physical impairment in the past, will suffer physical impairment in the future, suffered physical disfigurement in the past, will suffer physical disfigurement in the future, lost wages in the past, will suffer a loss of earning capacity in the future, incurred medical expenses in the past, and will incur medical expenses in the future. Plaintiff is seeking monetary relief from Defendant in an amount that is more than \$100,000.00, but less than \$250,000.00, as compensation for his damages.

VICARIOUS LIABILITY

10. At all time that is material to the incident described hereinabove and this case, Defendant's employees acted within the course, scope, and authority of their employment and/or agency relationship with Defendant. Defendant should therefore be held vicariously liable to Plaintiff for all of Plaintiff's damages alleged herein.

PREJUDGMENT AND POSTJUDGMENT INTEREST

11. Plaintiff further sues Defendant herein for prejudgment interest at the maximum rate allowed by law on those damages where such interest may be assessed and for postjudgment interest at the maximum rate allowed by law on all of Plaintiff's damages from the date of judgment until the judgment is paid in full.

Hidalgo County District Clerks
Reviewed By: Armando Cantu

C-0783-21-I

REQUEST FOR JURY AND JURY FEE

12. Plaintiff requests that the above-styled and numbered cause be tried to a jury and represents to the Court that the proper jury fee has been paid to the Clerk of this Court with the filing of Plaintiff's Original Petition.

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Plaintiff prays that upon final hearing, he have judgment against Defendant for all of his damages hereinabove alleged, for prejudgment and postjudgment interest, and for any and all other relief, both general and special, in law and in equity, and for all costs of Court in his behalf expended.

Respectfully Submitted,

THE CISNEROS LAW FIRM, L.L.P. 312 Lindberg McAllen, Texas 78501 Telephone No. (956) 682-1883 Fax No. (956) 682-0132

Email: email@cisneroslawfirm.com

MICHAEL J. CISNEROS State Bar No. 00793509 ARTURO CISNEROS State Bar No. 00789224

Attorneys for Plaintiff

AGE OF MANY HEU 9/30/2021 11:58 AM Hidalgo County District Clerks Reviewed By: Jassia De La Paz

CAUSE NO. C-0783-21-I

ERNESTO GRACIA CANTU,	§	IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF
	§	
Plaintiff,	§	
	§	
V.	§	398 TH JUDICAL DISTRICT
	§	
BIG LOTS STORES, INC.,	§	
	§	
Defendants.	§	HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

DEFENDANT BIG LOTS STORES, INC.'S ORIGINAL ANSWER AND VERIFIED DENIAL

COMES NOW, BIG LOTS STORES, INC. ("Defendant", incorrectly named and an improper party), and files its Original Answer and Verified Denial as follows:

I. <u>VERIFIED DENIAL</u>

Defendant specifically denies, pursuant to Rule 93(4) of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, that Defendant has any liability and/or interest in the incident that forms the basis of Plaintiff's lawsuit and said denial is supported by verification herein. Furthermore, Defendant denies that it is a proper party to this lawsuit and hereby challenges this Court's jurisdiction over them.

II. GENERAL DENIAL

Subject to and without waiving the foregoing Verified Denial, and in the alternative,

Defendant denies each and every, all and singular, material allegations contained within

Plaintiff's pleadings and any amendments or supplements thereto and demands strict proof
thereof in accordance with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

4/1/2021

DATE

3/30/2021 11:58 AM

Hidalgo County District Clerks

Reviewed By: Jassia De La Paz

III. SPECIAL EXCEPTION

Defendant specially excepts to Plaintiff's Original Petition and the assertions and causes of action against it are improper because this Defendant is the wrong party – and not a merely misnomer for the correct party. Thus, there is a defect in the parties.

IV NOTICE OF INTENT TO USE DISCOVERY

Pursuant to Rule 193.7 of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, Defendant hereby give actual notes to Plaintiff that any and all documents produced by Plaintiff may be used against Plaintiff at any pretrial proceeding or at the trial of this matter without the necessity of authenticating the documents.

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, BIG LOTS STORES, INC. prays that Plaintiffs take nothing by this suit, that Plaintiffs be required to pay Defendant's costs, and for such other and further relief, both general and special, at law and in equity, to which Defendant may show itself justly entitled.

Respectfully submitted,

MAYER LLP

750 N. St. Paul Street, Suite 700 Dallas, Texas 75201 214.379.6900 / Fax 214.379.6939

By: /s/ Zach T. Mayer

Zach T. Mayer State Bar No. 24013118

State Bar No. 24013116

zmayer@mayerllp.com

Sara Krumholz

State Bar No. 24060579

skrumholz@mayerllp.com

ATTORNEYS FOR DEFENDANT BIG LOTS STORES, INC.

Case 7:21-cv-00136 Document 1-1 Filed on 04/08/21 in TXSD

Page Page 11:58 AM
Hidalgo County District Clerks
Reviewed By: Jassia De La Paz

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that on the 30th day of March 2021, a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been forwarded to all counsel of record as follows:

Via E-File

Michael J. Cisneros Arturo Cisneros THE CISNEROS LAW FIRM, L.L.P. 312 Lindberg McAllen, Texas 78501 Email: email@cisneroslawfirm.com

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

/s/ Zach T. Mayer
Zach T. Mayer

Hidalgo County District Clerks Reviewed By: Jassia De La Paz

VERIFICATION

STATE OF TEXAS	§
	8
COUNTY OF DALLAS	8

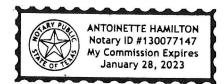
BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared ZACH T. MAYER who, being by me duly sworn upon his oath, deposed and stated that he is duly qualified and authorized in all respects to make this verification on behalf BIG LOTS STORES, INC. that he has read the above and foregoing Original Answer and Verified Denial and that the factual statements contained in Section II of the Original Answer are within his personal knowledge and are true and correct.

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED TO BEFORE ME, on this the 30th day of March

Antoinette Hamilton/Notary Public, State of Texas

My Commission Expires: 1-28-23

2021.



Case 7:21-cv-00136 Document 1-1 Filed on 04/08/21 in TXSD Page 20 of 25

CASE SUMMARY CASE NO. C-0783-21-I

Ernesto Gracia Cantu VS. Big Lots Stores Inc. Location: 398th District Court

Judicial Officer: Vasquez, L. "Keno"

Filed on: 03/01/2021

CASE INFORMATION

Case Type: Injury or Damage - Other (OCA)

DATE CASE ASSIGNMENT

Current Case Assignment

Case Number Court Date Assigned Judicial Officer C-0783-21-I 398th District Court 03/01/2021 Vasquez, L. "Keno"

PARTY INFORMATION

Plaintiff Gracia Cantu, Ernesto CISNEROS, MICHAEL J.

Retained 956-682-1883(W)

Lead Attorneys

Defendant Big Lots Stores Inc. MAYER, ZACH T
Retained

Retained 214-379-6900(W)

INDEX DATE **EVENTS & ORDERS OF THE COURT** 04/01/2021 Request DEFENDANT'S 2ND REQUEST FOR A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE RECORD 03/31/2021 E-Filing Forwarded to Court Queue ORDER SETTING TELEPHONIC DOCKET CONTROL CONFERENCE 03/31/2021 Proposed Order ORDER SETTING TELEPHONIC DOCKET CONTROL CONFERENCE 03/31/2021 Motion for Docket Control Conference, Filed 03/31/2021 Notice Sent Party: Attorney MAYER, ZACH T COPY REQUEST EMAILD COPIES TO rsenegal@mayerllp.com 03/30/2021 A Request DEFENDANT'S REQUEST FOR A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE RECORD 03/30/2021 Defendant's Original Answer Party: Defendant Big Lots Stores Inc. 4/1/2021 03/03/2021 Citation Issued DATE A true copy I cartify Party: Defendant Big Lots Stores Inc. LAURA HINOJOSA District Clerk, Hajalgo Qunt

Case 7:21-cv-00136 Document 1-1 Filed on 04/08/21 in TXSD Page 21 of 25

CASE SUMMARY CASE NO. C-0783-21-I

03/03/2021	Citation Big Lots Stores Inc. Served: 03/05/2021 Anticipated Server: E-Served to Attorney Actual Server: E-Served to Attorney Return Date/Time: 03/24/2021 Original Petition (OCA)	
DATE	FINANCIAL INFORMATION	1
	Defendant Big Lots Stores Inc. Total Charges Total Payments and Credits Balance Due as of 4/1/2021	41.00 41.00 0.00
	Plaintiff Gracia Cantu, Ernesto Total Charges	360.00

Total Payments and Credits Balance Due as of 4/1/2021

360.00 **0.00**



LAURA HINOJOSA HIDALGO COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK

Greetings:

Attached please find a copy of an order or judgment notifying you that an order has been signed in a case you are a party to or have been carbon copied on.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist you. Please contact our office if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Laura Hinojosa

Hidalgo County District Clerk

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS MCALLEN DIVISION

ERNESTO GRACIA CANTU,	§
Plaintiff,	§
	§
v.	§ CIVIL ACTION NO. 7:21-cv-00136
BIG LOTS STORES, INC.,	§ JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
Defendant.	§
	§

DEFENDANT'S LIST OF ALL COUNSEL OF RECORD

Defendant BIG LOTS STORES, INC. files this List of Counsel pursuant to Local Rule 81 of the Southern District of Texas as follows:

A list of all counsel of record, including addresses, telephone numbers and parties represented.

Counsel for Plaintiff
Ernesto Gracia Cantu
THE CISNEROS LAW FIRM, LLP
312 LINDBERG
MCALLEN, TEXAS 78501
Telephone: 956.682.0132

Counsel for Defendant
Big Lots Stores, Inc.
Zach T. Mayer, Attorney-in-Charge
Sara J. Krumholz
MAYER, LLP
750 North Saint Paul Street, Suite 700
Dallas, Texas 75201
Telephone: 214.379.6900